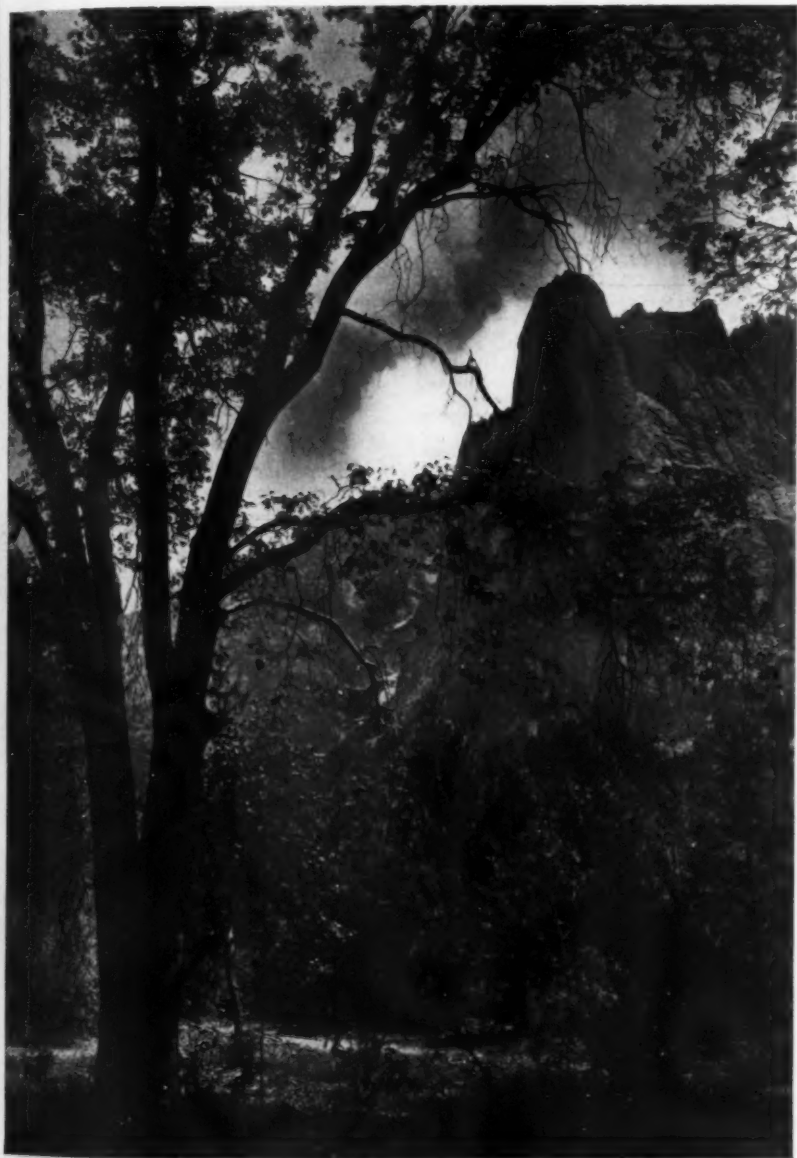


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# SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN

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Contributions on subjects of interest to Sierra Club members are welcome, and should be sent to Editorial Board.

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THE COVER.—Sentinel Rock, Yosemite Valley. By Joseph N. LeConte.

## EDITOR'S MISCELLANY

*Photographs.* The beautiful photographs reproduced on the covers are representative of the truly remarkable LeConte collection, which the Sierra Club owns and has available for the enjoyment of members. If you have not yet enjoyed the privilege of viewing these almost priceless prints, we should perhaps remind you of their story.

The prints were made in 1944 from the original negatives which Joseph N. LeConte had exposed during or just before the beginning of the century. It is appropriate that the modern work should have been done by Ansel Adams, who combines with his matchless technique a deep love and appreciation of the mountain scene, and who accorded the plates "the reverent handling they deserve." Each one was individually studied, and printed and

finished by that process which would best express its qualities.

The Club owns three sets of pictures (four albums each); they are at LeConte Lodge in Yosemite Valley, at Parsons Memorial Lodge at Tuolumne Meadows, and in the Club office in San Francisco; make a date with yourself to see them sometime!

\* \* \*

*Soloists.* The proverb may have it that "he travels fastest who travels alone," but any wise mountaineer recognizes that he travels most safely who travels in company. Unfortunately, not everyone who visits the mountains is a wise mountaineer—and so there arises many a problem.

A solo climber may tend to admire his own prowess more than do the people who have to go out after him when he gets into trouble. Representative is this comment (in a letter to his brother) by an officer of the Shasta National Forest:

"We had a lost man on the Mountain, and spent a full day tracking him around. He finally came out on the Mud Creek side. He was one of those who climbed alone—had never been on a mountain before and took off in the wrong direction when he was almost down. Three of our crew went to the top (14,162 feet elevation) to be sure he had not gone over and down the north side. I wish there was some way to keep them from climbing alone."

\* \* \*

*Gift.* Twelve photographs by Albert Oliveras of mountain scenes in Spain were recently presented to the Sierra Club by Dr. Frank Canivell, of Barcelona, Spain, now studying in San Francisco. Both Dr. Canivell and Mr. Oliveras are members of the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya, oldest and largest mountaineering club in Spain. The pictures, given "as a token of friendship," are to be on exhibit in the Club rooms until September 21.

## Wilderness Today, Resort Tomorrow?

(An analysis prepared by David R. Brower for presentation at a meeting of the Winter Sports Committee, August 22, 1946. Both the Winter Sports Committee and the Conservation Committee had been requested to express their views on the proposed revision of the boundary of the San Geronio Wild Area to the Board of Directors, who had in turn received such a request from the Forest Service.—Ed.)

The San Geronio question seems to be two questions rather than one:

1) What becomes of the value of the Forest Service Wilderness Area (or Wild Area) policy if the boundaries of an area are modified to suit a pressure group—any pressure group? This is a question of nationwide importance.

2) If modification of the San Geronio Wild Area boundary is advisable, then what developments outside the new boundary will allow the best possible use of the region by (a) summer users who value the area primarily for its wildness, (b) summer users who prefer some development and easier access, (c) ski mountaineers and ski tourists, and (d) skiers who demand maximum access, accommodations, and lift facilities? This question is of importance primarily to Southern Californians.

The Sierra Club contains members who are interested in or advocates of one or another of all aspects of the two questions, and I believe the interests of the committees should be as comprehensive. The Winter Sports Committee is probably concerned primarily with recommending answers to question 2; but that question cannot be answered intelligently without full consideration first being given to question 1.

Question 1 (relating to policy) can be dealt with whether or not one has seen the area involved. Since requests for modification will almost invariably be in the direction

of reducing the area of wilderness, that would seem to be the only matter with which the Sierra Club, as a conservation organization, need concern itself. I, then, would feel that modification, in this sense, would destroy the value of the Forest Service Wilderness policy. If one pressure group can effect a change, then the basis for denying changes to other pressure groups is gone. Precedent becomes a wedge rather than a block, a camel's nose rather than a watchdog's bite, or an avenue of infection rather than a source of immunity. Other metaphors will be supplied on request. Examples are too plentiful to need listing here; one chain-reaction generalization will suffice: the "fire road" brings tourists who are the precursors of those who demand, successively, the road without a gate, the road with a better surface, the highway, and finally all the appurtenances of the highway—the service station, the store, the tourist cabins, the lodge and hotel, the garbage, the spur roads (which multiply the chain reaction), the depletion of fish and wildlife resources, and greater fire hazard. The chain reaction is not always of spectacular rapidity, but even when it is slow, the prolonged radioactivity of the links is malignant in effect. "To be safe, resist the beginnings." I will submit here that only the trail, which might be presumed to be a link, is of too little potency to be capable of starting that chain reaction. People who travel the trail are, more often than not, anxious that the trail should be not quite so wide, not quite so suggestive of going elsewhere fast.

Moreover, as means of reaching the borders of a wilderness are improved—and that improvement, as well as the improvement in techniques for traveling in a wilderness, is constant—there develops a conclusive argument for the increase, rather than the decrease, of the area of that wilderness. The use—as wilderness—of what wilderness we

have is by no means decreasing. The National Park idea has, through careful representation before the public, produced a national recreational resource whose value is no longer seriously questioned. All help should be given the Forest Service in its effort to demonstrate a similar value to the people in its wilderness areas.

Now for Question 2. If the foregoing arguments should fail, or if better and more skillfully expressed arguments should fail, those who have been holding the line for Wilderness should have a second line of defense, so that there is no rout. The elements of question 2 should be discussed—and, if possible, answered—by those who know the San Geronio terrain. But in that discussion,

we should not forget that we are talking about a *second* line of defense. I think the Sierra Club's course in the first is clear.

My conclusion would be this: no matter what the pressure, or whose, let us assume that our small bit of remaining wilderness is of inestimable value—*inestimable* because we cannot even now put down in words what its present value is, and because we cannot now know of what greater value it may become. Therefore let us for the present, and until such time as it is completely proved that a wilderness has no present or future value as wilderness—let us now look straight into the eye of the man who would slice hunks off that wilderness, and say firmly, "Hands off!"—and mean it.

## Summer Outings Highly Successful

Over 1200 man-weeks of mountain enjoyment! Such is the score achieved between late June and the end of August through the efforts of the Outing Committee and its subcommittees—and of the participants themselves.

The nine different outings, of five different kinds, ran the gamut from the most pampered up to the most rugged (and hence most inspiring) with a Saddle-Horse Trip, two Base Camps, three periods of the High Trip, three Burro Trips, and two Knapsack Trips.

A person's impressions—and memories—of a trip are probably composed principally of scenery, weather, and food. Every trip had plenty of each; only in the last was variety sometimes lacking. But even the High Trippers or Knapsackers will tell you, "The food was swell (in spite of the Spam)!"

The weather was nothing if not unusual. Old timers who had grown accustomed to practically rainless summers neglected to advise newcomers as to what *might* happen—and, this year, did. The precious dunnage weight that was taken up with unnecessary

hot-water bags and extra blankets might better have been used for rain-proofing, for nights were seldom very cold, but often quite wet. Even rain and hail, though, have their compensations. They never occur without a cloud accompaniment, which makes it fine for the photographers; and the frequent obligato of thunder and lightning also makes it fine for those who enjoy spectacular displays by Nature. And even the few who shun cameras and tremble through thunderstorms are made happy when the sun comes out again. So why should the management ever feel downhearted about a little rain? (After it's over, that is!)

And as for scenery—anyone who has learned to love the mountains is always happy anywhere in the Sierra Nevada, and yet visits to the Evolution group or the headwaters of Woods Creek, to the Mono Recesses, or to the Banner-Ritter country must always be outstanding.

The Club's many different outings are all outgrowths of the traditional High Trip. Through diversification, the Outing Committee is able to care for an increasing num-

ber of people on mountain trips. Their own theme also strenuous climbing through High Trips. Establishing individual pack trips, as we know, Sierra Club.

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ber of people who wish to visit the high mountains and yet cannot or will not organize their own trips; the variations on the original theme also meet demands for either less strenuous or more independent ways of traveling through mountain regions. But the High Trip remains unique. Other organizations establish base camps, and other groups of individuals can run saddle-horse trips, pack trips, or burro trips; but the High Trip as we know it is something peculiar to the Sierra Club and the Sierra Nevada.

The 1946 version of the High Trip was slightly altered, its three two-week periods offering opportunity to more people, but fewer at a time. However, in only the middle period were all reservations filled. High Trip Committee members are inclined to think it is less a matter of decrease in demand than a matter of people's inability to make up their minds. So many rushed to sign up for the first postwar trips—even though they weren't at all sure of going—that by late spring waiting lists had already been established, word got about that the trips were sold out, and those who had been disappointed went about the making of other plans; subsequent with-

drawals of the undecided left vacancies which it was too late to fill. Be that as it may, the Outing Committee does not now plan to run a six-week trip in 1947.

It will be a long time before the first-two-weekers forget the first day's hot, dry climb up from Carroll Creek or the contrasting wetness of their departure from Center Basin via Onion Valley, nor will they forget the grandeur of Foresters Pass. The middle-two-weekers must certainly retain an indelible impression of the violence of the denial of the discredited saying, "It never rains at night in the Sierra," but on the other hand they must long remember the beauty of sunny days at Sixty Lake Basin and the inspiration of the famous cross-country trip from Palisade Lakes to Dusy Basin. Third-two-weekers will cherish memories of Muir Pass and Colby Meadows—oh, yes! and their share of rain, too! But if you ask any High-Trippler, from any of the three periods, to tell you his outstanding impression, chances are nine out of ten he will say something about good fellowship and cooperation. So it seems that times haven't changed, after all.

C.E.M.

## Discouragement for Minarets Miners

Off and on we hear disturbing rumors of prospecting and of proposed mining in the Minarets region. There are iron deposits in the area, and earlier attempts have been made to develop mines there.

A June 1945 bulletin of the State Division of Mines carries an official report entitled "Minarets Magnetite Deposits of Iron Mountain, Madera County, California." The report is by Parker D. Trask and Frank S. Simons, field geologists of the U. S. Department of the Interior. Iron Mountain is at the southern end of the Ritter Range, south of The Minarets; the deposits are on the west side of the mountain.

Although there is always the possibility of

mining development practically anywhere, the report states that these particular deposits are not in a very advantageous position for remunerative mining. (And who wants to mine just for the fun of it?) "The inaccessibility of the deposits, the relatively high phosphorus content, and the small tonnage make them less attractive than some of the other western iron deposits that are nearer to the market. . . . They lie in rugged glaciated country, 1000 feet above timberline. Snow lies on the ground for about eight months in the year, and difficulty would be encountered in mining the deposits during the winter and spring. . . . [The deposits] are 14 miles by

trail from the nearest road. . . 14 miles of difficult mountain road would have to be built before the ore could be transported to the nearest rail-head 90 miles away. These difficulties coupled with the relatively high

phosphorus content of the ore do not make the deposits particularly attractive at the present time."

Maybe would-be developers will thus be discouraged for a little while, anyway.

## Mountaineering Hazards of Past Recalled

Is true progress ever achieved in any field? The student of world politics who compares today's newspapers with those of the past may find but little cause for encouragement. But the mountaineer coming across a press release of some four decades ago may reflect that his sport has been freed of some of the hazards of yesteryear. A member has sent us a clipping from a *Chicago Sun* of (probably) 1903:

### 150 KILLED IN THE ALPS.

Some of the Season's Victims Women, Who Sacrificed Life to Fashion.

*Special Cable Dispatch to THE SUN.*

LONDON, Aug. 15.—The death toll in the Alps this season has been very large. Already more than three hundred accidents have been recorded, resulting in the loss of 150 lives.

No district has escaped. From the Jura Mountains, the Dauphin and Maritime Alps, the great Swiss ranges, and the Austrian peaks the story is the same. Almost daily there is a tale of perilous adventure, accident and death.

The general cause of disaster has been the exceptionally unfavorable weather combined with unprecedented false economy. Case after case has been due to climbing without

guides in disregard of the weather and snow conditions, while several deaths have been due to the foolish and increasing practice by women of climbing attired in fashionable costumes, such as lace petticoats and light shoes. An example of such a fatal fall was that of Miss Gillman, who was climbing Mont Pilatus attired in a smart spring toilette. There was also the case of Mme. Petiadoff, whose fatal fall on Mont Seposoir was directly due to wearing fashionable clothes and thin shoes.

One of the most marvellous escapes was that of the Hon. Gerald Fitzgerald on Monte Rosa. He was passing along a dangerous edge, roped between two guides. Fitzgerald and the younger guide, Alner, fell, but the rope held and young Alner succeeded in clinging to a rock. He saved himself and, reaching a hut, telephoned for help. Fitzgerald having broken his right leg was unable to help himself and remained for seven hours suspended in midair over a precipice of 10,500 feet. Thanks to the indomitable courage of old Alner, who stood motionless those seven hours with his leg propped against a boulder supporting him at the end of the rope till help arrived, he was saved.

## Annual Photograph Exhibit

For the first time since 1942, the exhibit of photographs taken on Sierra Club summer trips will be held, as follows:

October 25 to November 9 at the headquarters of the Southern California Chapter, 704 Auditorium Building, 427 West Fifth Street, Los Angeles.

November 18 to December 7 at the Club headquarters, 1050 Mills Tower, 220 Bush Street, San Francisco.

Dates for other chapters will be announced later.

It is hoped that all who took photographs on the 1946 Sierra Club outings will exhibit

their album sure to be found

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their albums, for in each collection there are sure to be pictures of special interest not to be found elsewhere.

Albums should be at the headquarters of the Southern California Chapter before the opening date.

It has been the custom for exhibitors to permit members of the Club to obtain prints at a slight margin above cost. Orders will not be handled through the Club office, but

should be sent directly to the exhibitors. Therefore it is important that each photograph be numbered and prices stated; also, that each photographer include with his album his name and address and the dates of the period during which orders will be accepted. The prices should be sufficient to cover the cost of mailing. If an exhibitor does not wish to accept orders, this should be indicated.

## United Nations to Have Permanent Forestry Staff

Of interest to those who are concerned with problems of national resources is the recent appointment of Marcel Leloup of France to the position of director of Forestry and Forest Products for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

With many years of responsibility and experience in forestry, Mr. Leloup was the head of the French forestry delegation to the UN conference in Quebec in October 1945, where he took a leading part in shaping the forestry organization. Recently he came to Washington to preside over a UN forestry committee meeting, and was named head of the international forestry organization.

Sierra Club members and other conservationists of the west will be very much interested to know that Stuart Bevier Show, chief of California's national forests for the past twenty years, is to be the Deputy Director and Chief Silviculturist of that division of the United Nations organization. Mr. Show will report for duty October 1, 1946. He has been a member of the Sierra Club since 1926, and was elected to honorary member-

ship in 1937. His record in forestry in California has been so outstanding that the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club, at their meeting of September 1, offered their congratulations on his new appointment, and expressed appreciation for the fine service in the past. His work was also recognized by special resolution of the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs at their annual convention September 1, 1946.

The appointment of these outstanding men marks the beginning of a permanent forestry staff in the UN. This division will take over the combined functions of two existing international organizations, the Comité International du Bois and the Centre International de Silviculture.

Perhaps not so much publicized, but as important as almost any part of the UN, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations plans for the future of our forests and farms, working towards the most efficient coordination of all the natural resources of the world.

## Reports on Trails Requested

The Trails Committee is anxious to receive reports on trail conditions. Sierra travelers who have noted—and can accurately describe

—sections which are especially in need of trail work should communicate with Mr. Walter A. Starr, chairman of the committee.





